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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 TOKYO 003191

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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 07/12/07-1

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- (2) Low support rate ends up with substantial loss of seats in past elections; Troubled premier faced with difficult situation

#### ARTICLES:

- (1) Poll on Abe cabinet, pension fiasco, money-and-politics issue, constitutional revision, House of Councillors election

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July 10, 2007

#### Questions & Answers

Q: Do you support the Abe cabinet?

Yes 12.4  
Yes to a certain degree 31.8  
No to a certain degree 29.9  
No 23.5  
Don't know (D/K) 2.4

Q: On the issue of the government's pension record-keeping flaws, Prime Minister Abe says his government and ruling coalition will enact special legislative measures into law and will recover public

confidence in the pension system. Do you trust their efforts?

Yes, very much 4.2  
Yes, somewhat 26.6  
No, not very much 39.3  
Almost no 28.5  
D/K 1.4

Q: What do you think should be done about the pension system?

If the government pays pension benefits without fail, it's all right to maintain the current system 31.5  
Pensions for those self-employed and salaried workers should be unified, and premiums and benefits should be determined according to income 38.2  
I can't trust government-managed pensions, so we should save money ourselves or rely on a private-sector insurance company's pensions 18.5  
Other answers (O/A) 5.8  
D/K 6.5

Q: In the Abe cabinet, three ministers-Genichiro Sata, Toshikatsu Matsuoka, and Fumio Kyuma-have been replaced due to their resignation or suicide over the past nine months. What do you think about Prime Minister Abe's responsibility for his appointment of the three?

The prime minister should have made more efforts to defend them so they would not have to resign or commit suicide 6.0  
They had their own problems, so there was nothing the prime minister could do 24.6  
The prime minister is also to blame for his appointment of persons who are suspicious or make inappropriate remarks 62.5

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O/A 3.6  
D/K 3.3

Q: What do you think about Prime Minister Abe's efforts for politics-and-money issues?

Appreciate very much 1.5  
Appreciate somewhat 22.2  
Don't appreciate very much 46.0  
Don't appreciate at all 27.6  
D/K 2.7

Q: The National Referendum Law came into effect. What do you think about revising the Constitution?

The Constitution should be revised within five years while Prime Minister Abe is president of the Liberal Democratic Party 6.8  
They should hold discussions regardless of the prime minister's term of office, and the Constitution should be revised 58.1  
It's all right to hold discussions, but the Constitution should not be revised 23.1  
The Constitution should never be revised, so I'm against holding discussions 6.4  
D/K 5.7

Q: If the Constitution is to be revised, what do you think should be subject to its revision? (Multiple answer)

Preamble should be amended 35.1  
Article 9 should be amended 47.1  
Environmental rights should be added 42.7  
The right to know and privacy rights should be added 36.7  
Constitutional provisions should be altered to allow financial aid to private educational institutions 24.3  
Respect for life ethics should be added 34.4  
O/A 3.9  
D/K 11.6

Q: If Article 9 of the Constitution is to be revised, how do you think it should be revised? (Multiple answer)

It should expressly stipulate Japan's maintenance of armed forces for self-defense 45.7

It should expressly stipulate international contributions 50.0

It should expressly stipulate Japan's right of collective self-defense 48.0

O/A 3.7

D/K 15.0

Q: What do you think about decentralization, including the regional system?

The government should push for decentralization to reduce its jobs and leave them to local governments 54.4

I'm worried about the government's weakened authority, so it's all right to maintain the current system 24.2

The government's authority should be strengthened, so the government should not do anything like decentralization 11.5

D/K 9.9

Q: What do you consider to be important in the upcoming election for

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the House of Councillors?

Economic, employment measures 15.0

Pension system reform 14.1

Social security like healthcare and nursing care 29.9

Constitutional revision 3.5

Education reform 7.7

Politics-and-money transparency 6.4

Social divide correction 7.1

Civil service reform 9.4

Better relations with China, South Korea, North Korea, and other

Asian countries 4.0

D/K 2.8

Q: Will you go to the polls in the House of Councillors election this time?

Yes for sure 70.3

Probably yes 22.8

Maybe no 4.7

Absolutely no 1.4

D/K 0.9

Q: If you go to the polls, which political party's candidate are you going to vote for in your electoral district?

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 27.3

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 31.4

New Komeito (NK) 5.5

Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 2.9

Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1.6

People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0.5

Other political parties 2.3

Independent 6.9

Abstain from voting 0.7

D/K 21.0

Q: If you go to the polls, which political party's candidate or which political party are you going to vote for in your proportional representation bloc?

LDP 26.8

DPJ 32.4

NK 6.8

JCP 3.4

SDP 2.5

PNP 0.9

New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0.6

Other political parties 5.5

Abstain from voting 0.9

D/K 20.3

Q: Which political party did you vote for in your proportional

representation bloc at the time of the 2005 election for the House of Representatives?

LDP 42.1  
DPJ 27.3  
NK 6.4  
JCP 3.5  
SDP 2.8  
PNP 0.5

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NPN 0.2  
Other political parties 0.4  
Abstained from voting 7.5  
Yet to reach voting age 2.0  
D/K 7.4

Q: Which political party do you support?

LDP 39.9  
DPJ 21.2  
NK 5.2  
JCP 2.7  
SDP 2.1  
PNP 0.4  
NPN 0.2  
Other political parties 0.5  
None 21.8  
D/K 6.0

Polling methodology: For the survey, a total of 200 model locations were sampled out of municipalities across the nation. The survey was conducted July 6-8 over the telephone on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis, with the aim of calling up to 2,400 voters.

(Note) The total % age does not necessarily become 100 % due to rounding.

(2) Low support rate ends up with substantial loss of seats in past elections; Troubled premier faced with difficult situation

TOKYO (Page 2) (Full)  
July 9, 2007

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is in a fix with his government's pension fiasco, Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma's resignation over his A-bomb remarks, and Agriculture Minister Norihiko Akagi's murky office operating expenses. The Tokyo Shimbun looked into cabinet approval ratings in public opinion surveys taken before the past three elections for the House of Councillors, and then looked into the number of seats garnered in those elections. Their correlations reveal a certain "rule of thumb" that come down severe on the premier.

1998

The 1998 election for the House of Councillors took place at the time of Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. The approval rating for the Hashimoto cabinet was 35 % in a survey conducted about a month before the election. That figure reset the Hashimoto cabinet's worst public-rating record. The nation's economy at the time had lost its momentum with a sharp increase in the public burden as a result of the raising of the consumption tax rate. Hashimoto was accused of "economic mismanagement." The ruling Liberal Democratic Party suffered a crushing defeat, winning only 44 seats. Hashimoto stepped down to take responsibility for failing to secure a majority of the seats in the House of Councillors.

2001

The 2001 election for the House of Councillors was a national election soon after Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi took office.

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Backed by his overwhelming popularity, the approval rating for the Koizumi cabinet scored a record-breaking high of 72 % in a survey taken on the day before the election. The LDP won an overwhelming victory with 64 seats-more than half the number of seats up for election. The outcome of the election tracked with the high support rate, and the Koizumi cabinet was off to a stable start.

2004

The 2004 election for the House of Councillors was the second national election for Prime Minister Koizumi. At the time, the Koizumi cabinet was under fire from the public, particularly since some of the ministers were found to have failed to pay into public pension plans. In addition, Koizumi had just dispatched the Self-Defense Forces to Iraq (despite public disapproval of this move). His cabinet's support rate was 44.4 % in a survey taken two days before the election. At that time, the Koizumi cabinet was in the doldrums of public support. The LDP garnered only 49 seats, failing to sustain its pre-election number of seats up for reelection. The LDP was defeated by the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), which won 50 seats. The ruling coalition, however, managed to secure a majority of seats. In September that year, however, Prime Minister Abe, who was LDP secretary general at the time, was demoted to "deputy secretary

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general" as a way of taking responsibility (for the poor election).

2007

The current Abe cabinet's support rate, which was 65 % at its inauguration, has steadily plummeted to 33.5 % in the most recent survey. The figure is lower than the Koizumi cabinet's support rate three years ago (prior to the Upper House race) and is on the same plane as that of the Hashimoto cabinet. The LDP will inevitably have to fight an uphill battle in the upcoming July 29 House of Councillors election. The prime minister has been stumping the nation for more than a month trying to regain public confidence. He has been on the move to explain his government's measures to counter the pension mess. Will the tide change for the better in time?

Cabinet support ratings and seats won in past House of Councillors elections

	Most recent support rate	No. of seats garnered
Hashimoto cabinet 18th election		
(July 12, 1998)	35.0 %	LDP = 44
NK	= 9	
DPJ	= 27	
Koizumi cabinet 19th election		
(July 29, 2001)	72.0 %	LDP = 64
NK	= 13	
DPJ	= 26	
20th election		
(July 11, 2004)	44.4 %	LDP = 49
NK	= 11	
DPJ	= 50	
Abe cabinet 21st election		
(July 29, 2007)	33.5 %	
(June 23-24)	LDP = ?	
NK	= ?	
DPJ	= ?	
(LDP = Liberal Democratic Party; NK = New Komeito; DPJ = Democratic		

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Party of Japan or Minshuto)

SCHIEFFER